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SATURDAY MORNING,

GERVAIS MAKES LIE TEST OFFER

Denies Being Fired for $3,000 Bribe

Former undercover agent Pershing O. Gervais said Friday he is ready at any time to take a lie detector test to prove that he was not fired by District Attorney Jim Garrison for taking a $3,000 bribe.

Gervais, who gathered the tapes which led to Garrison's indictment for an alleged pinball gambling conspiracy, said Garrison and Ptn. Lynn Loisel were lying when they said Thursday that Gervais was dismissed by Garrison for taking a bribe.

Loisel, who was assigned to the DA's office, testified that Gervais was fired by Garrison after he took a bribe from attorney Burt Klein. Garrison later told newsmen he had asked Gervais to leave his office at the time but decided not to prosecute his chief investigator because he "didn't want to destroy him."

Gervais, who said he is trying to start a new life in Brookhaven, Miss., as a pizza parlor operator, told The Times-Picayune by telephone that to back up his assertion of innocence he would be willing to take a lie detector test in public.

"I would like to see the news media sponsor the test—in fact I would be willing to take it live on television," he said and added that national polygraph experts could be called to administer the test.

Although Gervais said he would like to see Garrison and Loisel take a lie detector test along with him, he does not expect them to comply.

He said however, that, "I challenge Jim Garrison to say on a lie detector that he knew of such a bribe. I guarantee you that the machine will short out. It may cause a power shortage in New Orleans.

"There was no bribe. To the best of my knowledge there was no affidavit alleging a bribe. It was never shown to me. I left the DA's office voluntarily, as a favor to Garrison and because I was ready to leave."

Gervais continued, "The reason that I resigned—as Garrison knows—is that in 1965 his enemies were using my presence in the DA's office as a battering ram against him.

"Because I was ready to leave the office anyway, and because I wanted at that time to do a favor for Garrison, I voluntarily offered to resign and he publicly said at the time that I was the finest person he knew.

"Isn't it remarkable that eight years later he should suddenly remember a bribe that he has never made mention of before? I think it highly unlikely that Garrison would want to match his veracity against mine, at least on this particular issue."

Gervais said whether he testified in the trial of Garrison and two others would be up to the state. He added that an attorney friend of his had advised him to make no more public statements on the case.

—Photo by The Associated Press.

PERSHING O. GERVAIS